

Like many of you, I have serious questions about the Transportation Security Administration's new body imaging technology and pat down procedures. I have [written](#) to the TSA Administrator and called for Congressional hearings about the need to look more closely at the privacy issues and effectiveness of the screenings, and especially the potential long-term health effects of the new technology.

Earlier this year, the Congressional Biomedical Caucus, which I co-chair, hosted a briefing in which [Dr. David Brenner](#) of Columbia University reported that certain scanning machines (known as "backscatter" scanners), currently in use at airports like JFK and proposed for wider deployment, deliver more radiation per screening than what TSA officials have claimed. Dr. Brenner, along with [other scientists](#), has asserted that excessive x-ray exposure can increase an exposed individual's chance of getting cancer. Further, these scanners deliver radiation to the head and scalp, parts of the body unlikely to be used to conceal dangerous items. Because the majority of cases of skin cancer diagnosed in the United States develop on the head, this is an unnecessary health risk.

We shouldn't be using, much less expanding the use of, technology unless we are sure of the health impact. The GAO, the investigative arm of Congress, is conducting an examination of backscatter technology. As I've urged, Congress should freeze funding for any further full-body scanning devices employing this technology until GAO completes its study and the government establishes a more rational and selective use of these procedures and technology based on sound science.

Strengthening Anti-Bullying Programs

In the wake of the Tyler Clementi tragedy, Tyler's parents issued a [statement](#) saying "our hope is that our family's personal tragedy will serve as a call for compassion, empathy and human dignity." Universities like Rutgers are working to ensure that campuses are not only places of learning, but places of compassion and respect as well.

Last week, I joined Senator Frank Lautenberg in introducing [legislation](#), named in Tyler's memory, that would support colleges as they put in place and strengthen anti-harassment and anti-bullying programs. The bill complements legislation passed in the [New Jersey State Legislature](#) and pending with the Governor and would help ensure that colleges and universities have a clear code of conduct that prohibits harassment. I thank Garden State Equality for its great work in advancing both the state and federal legislation.

Recognizing Educational Achievement

I want to extend my congratulations to [Saint Ann School](#) in Lawrenceville for being named a [Blue Ribbon School](#) by the U.S. Department of Education. The school is one of only 314 schools in the nation to achieve this distinction in 2010. The U.S. Department of Education's Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private schools that are academically superior. Schools like Saint Ann serve as models for other schools throughout the nation. I commend all those who deserve credit for this achievement, including the students, teachers, parents, administrators, and a supportive community.